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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

### THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

**A** GAIN the season is with us when we repeat the song the angels sang of Peace on Earth, Good Will toward Men. But even as we plan for the celebration of the great anniversary, newspapers, magazines, pulpit and platform are telling us there is no peace on earth, and that the peace for which thousands of young lives were given is no peace and that our very civilization is tottering. It becomes increasingly clear that if we would have peace we must first have good will,—an understanding of other men and other minds that will do away with personal and national suspicions and racial hates. As we read the insistent headlines we say to ourselves,—How terrible! But it is all so far away, I can do nothing about these matters of statesmanship and diplomacy.

How little we realize our own potentialities. Educated for a service that knows no race, nor creed, nor color, our opportunities for fellowship, and fellowship is but good will made dynamic, are boundless. The stories we have collected for this issue are an index of the contribution nurses are making throughout the world to an international good will.

Ours is a young profession. Year by year an increasing number of nurses is attracted to the foreign fields with their poignant needs. Year by year we broaden our service to and our understanding of the many races fusing in the melting pot at home. By holding fast to our ideals we can make a mighty contribution to a true peace on earth.

This cannot be a merry Christmas to those who are acutely aware of the miseries of others, even though they be comfortable themselves, but it is a season when, as nurses and as citizens of the world, we may say as did Tiny Tim—"God bless us every one."

### ON CLASS ROOM WALLS

**I**T is a good custom, that of placing portraits of those who have gained distinction in some branch of the world's work on class room walls. Who is there who does not recall some face that fairly shone out from high school or college walls but, now that we have become nurses, we realize that our profession was not so represented. Young people of today sometimes see pictures of Miss Nightingale for hers is an historical figure that grows more majestic with the passage of the years and martyred Edith Cavell is not wholly unknown.

The Missouri State Nurses' Association has recently taken advantage of an opportunity to epitomize contemporary nursing by means of a portrait. The University of Missouri has inaugurated State Vocational Home Economics Contests—the purpose being "to stimulate interest in Home Economics education, to raise the standard of dress among girls of high school age, to encourage the study of food values and care of the sick in the home, and to dignify the profession of home-making." This year the contest in Home Nursing has been introduced for the first time and the State Nurses' Association, at the suggestion of the Department of

Education, provided a prize to be given to the winning school. It seems eminently fitting that this gift should be a framed picture of Miss Nutting—the woman and nurse who so completely typifies our conception of education expressed in terms of service.

#### MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CHILD HYGIENE ASSOCIATION

“**I**T is the purpose of the Association to supplant ten policemen with a single community nurse”—so said Herbert Hoover, the great conservator of child health, in his presidential address at the opening meeting of the annual convention of the National Child Hygiene Association. Mr. Hoover’s announcement of the consolidation of the Association with the Child Health Organization of America was highly significant of the growing tendency to make health programmes coöperative. His striking figure of speech was a graphic way of stating that social health may be expected to follow improvement in the physical and mental health of the individuals who make up any given unit of society.

The place of the nurse in any health programme is now not only assured, but is of ever increasing importance. A frank acknowledgment of the unscientific preparation of many nurses for their responsibilities in connection with so far-reaching and fundamental a health programme as that Mr. Hoover had in mind, was well voiced by Elizabeth Fox in her appeal to pediatricians to give instruction in our schools for nurses that will set up the normal as a standard, in place of the older limited objectives of remedial medicine. Such

teaching would be revolutionary in those schools where courses are based on the immediate needs of the hospital for bedside nursing, rather than on a broad conception of hospital function and of the demands to be made upon the nurse after her graduation.

Fortunately, we now have the Rockefeller Report on the Training of Hospital Executives pointing the way to a better understanding of the important place the hospital occupies in its community and enumerating its varied and increasing responsibilities. We have the Report of the Committee on Nursing Education with its clear cut analysis of conditions and suggested remedies. We find an increasing number of prospective students thinking of nursing in terms of service rather than merely in terms of potential income. In other words, we find all those groups developing a true sense of social obligation.

Health is becoming a matter of good business. A representative of the United States Chamber of Commerce stated that cities having a low death rate and that offer real advantages for children find it sound policy to advertise these things. Families planning a change of residence want to know whether a place is easy to live in or easy to die in; they do not willingly choose those with a high death rate.

When communities have come to realize that this type of good business is dependent upon adequate support of educational programmes such as that of the consolidated associations we shall more nearly approximate the ideals of positive health; and funds now expended on blue coated guardians of the public weal may be put to more constructive use.

## THE PSYCHOLOGY OF BULLETIN BOARDS

JUST as straws may show which way the wind blows, so may bulletin boards indicate the trend of thought in a school. We have seen bulletin boards in inconvenient, ill lighted places. We have found them filled with overlapping, out-of-date notices or unattractive notices of what should be attractive events. Quite tragically we have sometimes found them so filled with *Don'ts* that there was no room for anything else and so we have adopted a descriptive classification of bulletin boards. We call them positive and negative. The ones enumerated, it will readily be understood, belong in the negative class and we wonder if the *don'ts* have the same effect as the admonition of the mother whose parting message, in leaving her small daughter for a few hours, was, "Don't touch mother's pretty lily while she is gone." Was the child greatly to blame because the lily stem was broken before the mother was far on her way?

Fortunately, there are a greater number of positive than negative bulletin boards, well lighted, well placed, (we have even noted bath room doors so used) and carrying no message that had outlasted its usefulness. The contents of such boards are genuinely interesting. They carry not only business-like announcements of change of programme or adjustments of daily life, but constructive suggestions for the wise use of leisure—such as a commendation of books or magazine articles that make a special appeal or seem to have unusual value in their application to the personal or professional life of nurses. Here will be found announcements of special "treats," intellectual or social, that have been

planned for various groups. Such boards occasionally carry posters so intriguing that one wonders if any student or faculty member can possibly escape their lure. Positive bulletin boards are, to us, indicative of healthy schools and we know by their increasing number that our schools are growing better.

## NURSING TECHNIC

"SHE is a nice woman and she may be a good nurse, but"—How many times have you heard that opening phrase and have writhed in spirit because you knew that something unpleasant was about to be revealed? Sometimes the topic has been dress, again it has been manner, and still another time, unwise recreation. When it has prefaced a discussion of nursing technic you are fortunate if you have never wished for something, anything, in the way of distraction, in order that you need not reply.

How can one defend the nurse who manages so poorly that her patient's first nourishment of the day is administered at eleven o'clock? How defend the nurse who, having remembered to protect the handsome bedside table, feels that her duty in that respect is done and never gives it another thought, even when the protective covering has become unsightly with stain or soil? There is no defense for the nurse who is not ingenious enough to secure a paper bag or make a newspaper cornucopia for the soiled sputum cloths of a pneumonia patient instead of letting them accumulate in an unsightly and unsanitary heap on an open paper on the floor. Certainly there is absolutely no defense for the nurse who fails to respect her patient's innate desire for

privacy when intimate personal service is to be rendered. Surely we agree that the rule "Do unto others" should apply here, no matter how slender the training.

What of the schools that send out nurses of whom these and other bitter things are said? Just as "consciousness of kind" leads us to seek arguments for the defense of the individual nurse, so would we desire to defend the schools. But what of the schools? The recent humiliation of a friend who is a ward patient in one of our well known hospitals—and this is an instance that could be multiplied many times—because a nurse failed to make proper use of screens, gives food for thought. These things could not happen if students were taught the spirit as well as the technic of nursing. To the negligent student, the screen was but a superfluous piece of apparatus, easily ignored. To the thoughtful nurse, a screen is not only a piece of useful apparatus—it is also a symbol of the right of every human being to a reasonable and decent privacy at required times. Could the students in a school overlook the use of screens if they were taught the *spirit of nursing* along with its technic? We have all lived through the pressure of the day's work on busy wards. We

have much sympathy with the harassed administrator. Every graduate nurse can recall days when no amount of planning made it possible to compass everything. She is a fortunate nurse who, at such times, had the guidance of a clear visioned supervisor with an instinct for essentials. There is no finer attribute of good nursing than the power to discriminate between that which is essential and that which lends refinement but can be eliminated in time of stress. Nurses, whether student or graduate, who are careless about screening patients are not only violating the feelings of those who are at their mercy,—they are also blunting their own sensibilities. We are well aware that many a reader will say—this discrimination is nothing but the application of a little common sense, and we would answer that the school that helps its students to develop the faculty of discrimination or that most uncommon quality which is called common sense, will have much satisfaction in its results. The general application of common sense and a more general practice of our profession as we desire it when we ourselves require nursing, would go far toward eliminating conversations beginning, "She *may* be a good nurse, but—"

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*The Health Builder*, Doubleday, Page and Company, is the latest health magazine to make its bow to the public. The first number is both attractive and interesting and filled with the Spirit of Health and Happiness. Miss Clara D. Noyes has contributed a thoroughly practical article on "The Family Medicine Chest."